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ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
For the Year ended December 31st, 1941.

To Thetford Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,  
I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1941 as follows:—  
In accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health the report as in the last two years has been cut down, to save paper and printing, to essential facts connected with the routine work of the District and details of how it has been affected by the War. The documents from which it is constructed will be preserved for inclusion in a comprehensive report at the end of the War.

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area—7,096 acres.  
Registrar-General's estimate of Population at mid-year—4,508.  
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1941) according to Rate Book—1,296.  
Rateable Value—£17,410.  
Sum represented by a penny rate—£71. 3s. 4d.

The outstanding feature of the social conditions in the town is the large employment of women on war work and the reduction in unemployment, otherwise the industrial conditions remain the same.

There has been a continuance of the drift of Evacuees back to their homes.

Vital Statistics.

		Total.	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate	94	27	67	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population mid 1941—23.7.
	Illegitimate	3	1	2	
Still Births	...	2	1	1	Rate per 1,000 total births—21.
Deaths	...	63	31	32	Death Rate per 1,000 average population—13.9.

Deaths from Puerperal causes (Headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar-General's short list):—

No. 29 Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
No. 30 Other Puerperal causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

Death Rate of Infants under one year:—

All Infants per 1,000 live-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10.3
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10.6
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 Illegitimate live-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9.
„ „ Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

The Birth Rate is unusual from two points of view:—

1. The figure 23.7 per 1,000 against 14.2 for England and Wales. I think this is due to the number of newly married women who have married men in the Services and have followed them here and have on that account got no permanent domicile to which the birth can be transferred.

2. The large proportion of female births 69 against 28. This is a very unusual proportion.

The Death Rate 13.9 is slightly higher than that for England and Wales, 12.9.

Of the deaths recorded 38 occurred in persons over 70, 19 were over 80, and 2 over 90. The principle causes of death were Diseases of the Heart 22, Cancer 9, Cerebral Haemorrhage 8, Diseases of the Lungs 6.

The Infantile Death Rate of 10.3 per 1,000 against 59 for England and Wales is most satisfactory.

The health of the residents in the Town has been on the whole good, and there were no outstanding causes of invalidity. There have been no indications that the population, adult or children, are suffering in any way on the rations provided. A number of people have undoubtedly lost weight but usually they are persons in whom a moderate loss of weight is beneficial. I certainly did not notice any increase in the invalidity rate in the Town.

## **SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.**

### **1. (1). Personnel.**

**M.O.H.** part time M.D., D.P.H., who is also Medical Officer to the Infant Welfare Clinic.

**Sanitary Inspector**, part time, Royal Sanitary Institute.

**Health Visitor**, who acts as Nurse at the Infant Welfare Clinic, C.M.B., R.S.I. Health Visitors Examination, R.S.I. Maternity and Child Welfare Certificate.

**District Nurse**, S.R.N., C.M.B.

**Town Midwife**, C.M.B.

(2). **Health Services.** No change.

2. No change.

### **3. Maternity and Child Welfare.**

This work has as usual been carried out by the Thetford and District Maternity and Child Welfare Association. There have been none of the difficulties which have characterised the last two years owing to overcrowding of the Clinics by Evacuee children. The drift back to the towns of evacuees had started and soon one Clinic a month served for them. The hard weather in the early part of the year also reduced the attendances. It was soon evident that another factor was at work in reducing the attendances at the Clinics. This was that employment in war-work in the Town was plentiful and many of the mothers had taken it up and were unable to bring their children to the Clinics. To balance this Nurse Sowels kept up a close supervision by visiting them in their homes and in this way the work was carried on. On account of these factors the returns of members attending the Clinics has fallen and I do not look for a return to our usual numbers until we return to normal times. The other Clinics have received about their normal attendances with again an increase in the Post-Natal work at the Glycerine Clinic at St. Barnabas Hospital. The Ante-Natal work at this Clinic has also increased. The falling off in the attendances at the Welfare Clinic has not lightened the duties of the helpers in any way as the Clinic must be fully manned no matter how many children attend, and I would like to record my thanks once again to those ladies who perform this very useful service. The jam which had been made the previous summer by the W.V.S. was very useful in the rigorous winter and helped the work enormously. This year there was no surplus of fruit but in spite of that I am glad to record that the W.V.S. have made 540 lbs. of blackcurrant jam and between 30 and 40 pints of fruit juice. This will be carefully distributed again by Nurse Sowels in suitable cases. The value of this lies not only in the Vitamin C which it contains but in the sugar which it contains which supplements the deficiency in the sugar ration. It is interesting to note that the Government is now making an issue of Fruit Juice to children under 2. This is also distributed through the Welfare. We are very much indebted to the W.V.S. for their excellent work in the movement. The Government Scheme for Milk distribution is working well and has relieved the Association of heavy drain on its finances and has practically blotted out the usual annual loss of £25 to £30. During the year the immunisation of children against Diphtheria was seriously taken up and about 45 % of the Welfare age children were done. This is a poor percentage and further efforts through the Centre are being made to increase it.

I regret that in October my health broke down and I was ordered several months complete rest. I was fortunate in that the War Office released my son from Service to do my work until I was fit for work again. As he is fully conversant with modern Infant Welfare work at the London Hospital he has been carrying on my work at the Clinics.



The returns of the various Clinics is as follows:—

**Welfare Clinic.**

No. of Mothers attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	125
No. of Childrens attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	554
Average attendance of Children per Clinic	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14.5

**Ante-Natal Clinic.**

No. of Mothers attending	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
No. of attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32

**Post-Natal Clinic.**

No. of Mothers attending	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
No. of attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3

**St. Barnabas Hospital Clinic.**

No. of Ante-Natal cases attending	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	30
No. of attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	103
No. of Post-Natal cases attending	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31
No. of attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	178
Visits paid by Nurse Sowels to children in their homes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3605
Dental cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7

**4. Nursing Homes.** No change.

**SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF AREA.**

**1. (1) Water.**

No extension of Public Water supply was carried out during the year.

A sample of water is sent to the Public Analyst each year for Bacteriological and chemical examination.

This report is as follows:—

“This is a pure and wholesome water of excellent quality for drinking and all the purposes of a public supply. It is of exceptionally constant character as shown by previous analysis.”

During the year a chlorinating plant was installed at the Pumping Station and all the water is now chlorinated before it enters the reservoir.

**(2) Drainage and Sewerage.**

There have been no alterations or extensions of this service during the year.

**2. Rivers and Streams.**

No action has been taken this year.

**3. (1) Closet Accommodation.**

The only change has been 5 vaults converted to pail closets.

This alteration give totals of 311 W.C's., 633 pails, 376 privies.

**(2) Public Cleansing.**

No change.

**(3) Sanitary Inspection of Area.**

The report of the Sanitary Inspector is as follows:—

No. of Inspections for general nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	322
No. of Informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27
No. of Statutory notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
No. of Nuisances abated as the result of Informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
No. in hand at the end of the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

**(4) Shops and Offices.**

General routine inspections carried out.

**SECTION D.—HOUSING.**

Limited housing routine inspections have been carried out during the year.

**SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.**

**(a). Milk.**

As in previous years samples were taken and tested by Lactometer. No prosecutions were found necessary.

(b). **Meat and Other Foods.**

Work in connection with the inspection of carcasses slaughtered at the Area Slaughtering Centre at Thetford was maintained during the year. This entailed considerable night and Sunday work for the Inspectors. During the year some 7000 carcasses were examined and over 9 tons of meat condemned. Much tubercular meat was found.

A quantity of tinned food was inspected at various shops and a quantity condemned as unfit for human consumption.

**SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.**

During the year there was a widespread epidemic of Chicken Pox and a mild one of Measles.

Anti-diphtheria Inoculation was seriously taken up and the campaign this time was successful especially in the children of school age but the children under 5 were disappointing. 584 children between 5 and 15 were inoculated giving a percentage of 81 of the estimated total population of that age group; 197 children under 5 were done giving a percentage of 45 of the estimated population of children between 1 and 5 years.

**Notifications.**

Disease.	Total Cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Pneumonia	8	4	3
Chicken Pox	113	Nil.	Nil.
Whooping Cough	8	Nil.	1
Measles	54	Nil.	Nil.
Erysipelas	2	Nil.	Nil.
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	2	Nil.	Nil.
Scarlet Fever	1	1	Nil.

**Tuberculosis.**

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
5	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
15	1	—	2	2	—	—	—	—
25	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
65	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Totals	2	—	4	4	1	—	—	—

I have once again much pleasure in expressing my thanks to your Sanitary Inspector for his excellent work.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

14th Sept., 1942.  
Thetford.

*Archibald: Thir*

M.D., D.P.H.